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L I F E
AND
A N E C D O T E S
OF
G E N E R A L
P I C H E G R U,

COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE FRENCH
REPUBLICAN ARMY.

B Y
M. DE V..... a French Emigrant Officer.

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L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-
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AND
LETTERS

CEMBER



REPUBLICAN ARMY
COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMY

Mr. De Vries, a French Engineer

FORM D.O.M.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

HOW, T. REMILLY, GRAND, AND J. DE HOFF,
GENERAL MANAGERS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS I was generally known to be the Author of a pamphlet entitled, "DUMOURIER UNMASKED," or the Life and Adventures of the Hero of "Jemappe;" several persons have expressed a desire that I should publish the character and history of General Pichegru; and being willing to perform this delicate task, with the utmost candour and impartiality, I shall confine myself to what I frequently heard from the Commanders of the Artillery of Metz, in which he served eleven years, and from the officers of the Company he belonged to.

I presume, the veracity of this account will not be doubted, merely as coming from persons who differ with him in political opinion, but whose sentiments and situations place them beyond the suspicion of partiality. I shall not hesitate, therefore, to make known the character of a man who did not at first seem to be

one of the greatest favourites of Fortune; but who nevertheless, at this moment, attracts the attention of Europe.

If chance disposes sometimes of the laurels of Victory, it cannot disgrace the unsuccessful.*

* I should be sorry any one supposed that I wish to place General Pichegru on a parallel with Dumourier; it is not my intention to revive a languid and expiring flame.

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 that deep and penetrating subtlety, which
 while it endeavours to discover the secrets
 of others, artfully conceals his own.
A N E C D O T E S

PICHEGRU, having obtained an excellent
 education, resolved to enter the Holy Or-
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P I C H E G R U.

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 position, he embraced the profession of
PICHEGRU was born at Poligny, in the
 province of Franche-Comté, and was the
 son of a wealthy farmer.

He is about five feet five or six inches
 high; his face is broad, with dark brown
 hair and beard; his eyes, which are of the
 same colour, are rather above the common
 size; his nose large and fleshy, his mouth
 wide, his teeth tolerably good, and fore-

head small.—His manly figure expresses that deep and penetrating subtlety, which, while it endeavours to discover the secrets of others, artfully conceals its own.

Pichegru, having obtained an excellent education, resolved to enter into Holy Orders, and was admitted a brother of the Order of Minime;* but this situation not agreeing with his active and laborious disposition, he embraced the profession of Arms.

At that time (1783) Pichegru was about twenty-seven years of age. He went to Strasburg, and enlisted in the regiment of the artillery of Metz, which was garrisoned in that city, and here he combined the utmost regularity of conduct, with an astonishing

* Formerly one of the most austere religious Orders in France;

astounding facility in acquiring the knowledge of his profession.

He performed his duty with exactness, and entered into the spirit of his new employment, of which in a short time he became perfectly master.

A few years afterwards (about 1785 or 1786, as well as I can recollect) he was dangerously wounded in the right hand, when at exercise; his thumb was shot backwards, and his hand almost divided. As the wound was generally deemed incurable, the Minister was applied to for the ordinary pension of a cannoneer.—His few years service proving an obstacle to the success of this application, the Major of the regiment, on account of the general good conduct of Pichegru, and compassionating the situation of a young man

who might have been useful to the regiment, proposed to advance him to the rank of a Serjeant, the emoluments of which might afford him the means of subsistence.

As the character and manners of Pichegru favoured more of the well-educated man, than the private foldier, as soon as his wound was healed, he again entered on the study of the belles-lettres, and composed verses, some of which were tolerably good, and some but indifferent.

The Major, observing the conduct of Pichegru to be uniformly correct, placed him in the office of the Etat-Major of the regiment at the head of which he was in the year 1792.

Pichegru

Pichegru generally possessed the friendship of his equals, and the esteem and confidence of his superiors, without displaying, at the same time, any of those brilliant qualities which enabled him to act the part with success he was one day or other to appear in.

At the commencement of the Revolution, the prudent reserve of Pichegru was the first cause of his being noticed. His officers could with difficulty discover his opinion; and there is room to believe that he attentively observed the several events as they took place, and would have attached himself to the good cause, had not the other presented a vaster field of action.

His officers did him the justice to declare, that, in every cabal or insurrection, he behaved with the utmost prudence, ever performing

performing his duty with exactness, and observing a respectful obedience to the commands of his superiors. The Major of Artillery who made Pichegru a serjeant in the year 1785, gave him, in the month of January, 1792, the first commission of an officer, promoting him to the rank of Adjutant of one of the battalions: a short time after, he was appointed Lieutenant in the third.

It is reported that, in the beginning of the year 1792, he passed the Rhine, in order to make himself acquainted with the situation and resources of the armies of the Princes and the Allies; whether with an intention to determine on the side it was prudent to join, or to obtain such information as would probably insure the success of that he afterwards embraced, we are entirely ignorant.

In

In the same year Pichegru quitted the Artillery, in order to instruct a battalion of national guards, which he afterwards commanded, and which brought him into still greater repute.

Pichegru quitted his battalion for a situation in the Etat-Major of the Army of Custine. The experience he acquired in this kind of service, discovered, without doubt, those military talents which the nature of his occupation, in his own regiment, prevented him from displaying at a more early period.

Many who served under him, when he first obtained the command of a detached corps, say, that having always adopted a regular and uniform method of performing his duty, the sudden change of fortune, which even astonished himself, rendered

rendered his situation for some time awkward and embarrassing.

The victories which Pichegru has obtained, ought to be attributed more to his intelligence and rigorous punctuality in the execution, than to his military abilities as a commander in chief; for it is well known that all the plans of the campaign, calculated from every possible circumstance, are sent to him daily by the Military Committee, in which there are some old officers of the first talents, whose names, however, are very little known.

It is also a matter of notoriety, that those officers have before them the most exact and detailed plans of all the frontiers and country adjacent, charts of the former campaigns, with every material circumstance,

circumstance, and all the observations and remarks that have been made since or during the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.

It is generally allowed, that Pichegru possesses very considerable courage ; and that, even in the heat of action, his coolness does not forsake him. He is a man of the utmost humanity, of which last virtue he has given the most unequivocal proofs. It is reasonable to suppose, that his good fortune has neither rendered him proud nor assuming ; for never were his proclamations filled with those loud and contumelious boasts, or that ridiculous egotism, which disgraced those of his predecessors, and which were merely calculated to insult and irritate the Powers and Generals they had to oppose.

Not

Not long ago, being in company with an English Officer, whom he had invited to dinner, he silenced some young men under his command, who declared their opinions with much freedom, and seeming contempt, concerning their adversaries and the allied Powers. Whenever this topic was entered in among strangers, he endeavoured to avoid the subject, or to give a pleasing and good-natured turn to the conversation.

POSTSCRIPT.

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THE private life of General Pichegru, before the Revolution, affords neither information nor anecdote, being merely that of a simple cannoneer: at present, few but those who serve under him, ever hear any thing mentioned concerning it. We can form, however, an idea of his character at that time, through the channel of the public prints.

If any person imagines that it was my intention, in giving this detail, to flatter the self-love of Pichegru, or to represent him as a hero, they are deceived; my only motive being to prove, that if Generals of the first knowledge and skill have experienced disappointments in the late campaign,

paign, they had not to contend (as it was generally and artfully reported) with a man unskilled in military affairs, but absolutely against the greatest men of the age, directing the operations of a superior force.



THE END.

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